THE UNFAMILIAR *EVANGELIUM NICODEMI**

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During the past fifty years New Testament apocrypha have become a field of intensive research, partly in connection with the revival in biblical, Judaeo-Christian, and patristic studies, and partly as a result of new discoveries of early Christian and Gnostic writings. Much of this recent scholarship has concentrated on hitherto neglected or unknown Oriental texts, making them accessible through editions, translations, and commentaries. Less attention has been devoted to Latin apocrypha, many of which have long been available in print. They are often approached with a sense of familiarity, perhaps even an air of complacency, fostered by five hundred years of their printing. However, our intimacy with Latin apocrypha seems to be more apparent than real, for many commonly used editions present unreliable, not infrequently distorted texts. Prepared in different intellectual contexts and with different sets of methodological assumptions, those editions usually reveal more about their early modern editors than about the texts' ancient or medieval origins and vicissitudes. Their limited scope and unreliability often force us to suspend our judgments about Latin apocrypha or to perpetuate earlier errors, half-truths, and misconceptions. The only remedy for this unfortunate situation is the return to primary sources: to searching out and recovering textual traditions buried in hundreds of surviving but forgotten manuscripts. Only then will we be able to broaden and refine our understanding of Latin apocryphal texts and of their function in Western Christendom.

The Latin version of the apocryphal *Evangelium Nicodemi*, in the earlier Middle Ages usually titled *Gesta Salvatoris*, is one of those texts badly in need of intensive manuscript research and a new edition. The core of this complex, heterogeneous work, comprising accounts of Christ's trial, passion, and ascension, was originally composed in Greek (the so-called *Acta Pilati*) and survives in Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Georgian, Greek, and Syriac recensions.[1] In its most common Latin form, the apocryphon consists of three major narrative sections: (1) Christ's trial before Pilate and crucifixion, (2) events proving Christ's resurrection and ascension (with the story of Joseph of Arimathea woven into the narrative), and (3) Christ's descent into the underworld. Modern scholars have often referred to the first two sections as *Gesta Pilati*, and to the third as *Descensus ad inferos*.[2] Although there is no basis in the Latin manuscript tradition for these appellations, I shall retain them in this paper for the sake of consistency with earlier scholarship and for ease of reference.

Manuscripta, 33 (1989): 169-191

For the last two decades the *Evangelium* has attracted growing interest, particularly in its medieval vernacular translations.[3] The editors of these translations have raised a number of pertinent questions about the underlying Latin traditions, which, in spite of recent scholarly efforts, still await satisfactory answers. The Latin text or—perhaps more accurately—texts of the *Evangelium*, which have so deeply affected Western religious culture, remain a grey area on the medieval literary map. In the following pages, I attempt to explore the extent of our knowledge and of our ignorance about the apocryphon by reviewing its printed editions and confronting them with the textual traditions slowly emerging from newly identified manuscripts.

Editions

The earliest printed editions of the Latin *Evangelium* testify to its enormous popularity in late medieval and early Renaissance Europe. It was printed at least four times before or around 1500:

(1) Augsburg, Günther Zainer, c. 1473
(2) Milano, Printer for Boninus Mombritius, 1476-77
(3) Leipzig, Melchior Lotter, c. 1499
(4) Köln, Kornelis de Zierikzee, 1499/1500[4]

These are not, of course, critical editions in the modern sense and—in spite of Melchior Lotter's assurance that his *Evangelium* was "ex antiquissimis libris extractum bene correctum et noviter impressum"—make little attempt to investigate the history of the text. They are, however, valuable as witnesses to manuscript traditions that may have since perished.

The *Evangelium* continued to be printed frequently in the first half of the sixteenth century, as the following editions attest:

(5) København, Paulus Raeff, 1514
(6) Leipzig, Melchior Lotter, 1516
(7) Venezia, with the works of Matilda von Hackeborn-Vippra, ed. A. de Fantis, 1522
(8) Antwerp, Guil. Montanus, 1538
(9) Paris, Vivant Gaultherot, 1545[5]

These editions differed little in character from the earlier ones. In fact, judging from their titles, (5) and (6) give essentially the the same text as (3).[6] Their direct influence does not seem to have extended beyond the sixteenth century; indirectly, however, they may have helped to shape modern attitudes toward the apocryphon by enhancing the sense of its continued presence in our printed culture.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Latin *Evangelium* declined in prestige and popularity. On the one hand, it was attacked and ridiculed by Protestants for its fanciful account of the harrowing of hell; on the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church, engaged in critical self-examination

at the Council of Trent, tried to distance itself from it and censured it as unorthodox and dangerous to faith.[7] Ironically, an edition published during that period provided the standard text used well into the nineteenth century. It was included by Johann Basilius Herold in his *Orthodoxographa*, which appeared in 1555 and three years later was put on the Index by the University of Louvain (Bujanda 1986, 339). Herold's book was augmented and re-edited as *Monumenta S. Patrum Orthodoxographa* by Johann Jakob Grynaeus in 1569.

As printed by Grynaeus (1569, 643-59), the apocryphon, entitled *NICODEMI DISCIPULI, DE MAGISTRI ET SALVATORIS NOSTRI IESV CHRISTI Passione & Resurrectione, Euangelium*, shows a number of idiosyncratic features. It opens abruptly with the first words of the main body of the text, "ANNAS enim, & Caiphas & Summas . . .," and transforms the usual prologue dating Christ's passion into an explicit. It is not divided into chapters but, like most manuscripts, gives a continuous text broken into only a few paragraphs. The testimonies before Pilate about Christ's miracles are considerably expanded to include the first sign in Cana-in-Galilee and the healings in Capernaum. And finally, the text includes a closing account of Pilate's meeting with the Jews in the synagogue but lacks Pilate's letter to Claudius, a frequent appendage to the apocryphon.

The exact sources of this edition are not known, but parts of it, especially the testimonies section, correspond closely to the text found in Oxford, Bodleian Library (BL), MS Addit. A 367 (c. 1200; Madan 1905, 656-57). The following comparison will illustrate the similarities:

Grynaeus, *Monumenta*	Oxford, BL, MS Addit. A 367[8]
[646] Vidi Iesum uocari ad nuptias cum discipulis suis, & uinum deficere in Cana Galileae . . .	[7v] Vidi Ihesum uocari ad nuptias cum discipulis [8r] suis et uinum deficere in Chana Galileae . . .
Ego uidi Iesum in Capharnaum [647] docentem in synagoga. Et in synagoga erat quidam homo habens daemonium . . .	Ego uidi Ihesum in Capharnaum docentem in synagoga. Et in sinagoga erat quidam homo habens demonium . . .
Ego uidi, quod multa turba uenit ad Iesum a Galilaea & Iudaea, & maritima & multis regionibus circa Iordanem . . .	Ego uidi quod multa turba uenit ad Ihesum a Galilea et Iudea et a multis regionibus circa Iordanem . . .
Ego in Capharnaum uidi Iesum, & rogaui eum dicens: Domine, puer meus iacet paralyticus . . .	Ego eram Capharnaum et uidi ibi Ihesum et rogaui eum dicens: "Domine, puer meus iacet paraliticus . . ."
Habebam filium in Capharnaum, qui moriebatur, & cum audissem Iesum aduenire in Galilaeam, Abij, & rogaui eum, ut descenderet in domum meam . . .	[8v] Habebam filium in Capharnaum qui moriebatur. Et cum audissem Ihesum aduenisse in Galileam, abii et rogaui eum ut descenderet in domum meam . . .

Although no other manuscript of these testimonies is known, the Oxford codex is unlikely to have been Herold's sole or immediate source. In spite of the obvious correspondences, it differs substantially from the 1555 and 1569 editions in dividing the text into chapters with titles in red, including the prologue and Pilate's letter, and having no account of Pilate in the synagogue. It appears therefore that in preparing his text, Herold must have either used a different manuscript or combined several sources.

The *Orthodoxographa* version of the *Evangelium* was printed, with only minor alterations, by several later scholars. Johann Albert Fabricius corrected it, using some unspecified sources or incorporating his own conjectures, and made it part of his influential *Codex apocryphus Novi Testamenti* (1703, 238-98). He introduced it with a survey of ancient and contemporary opinions concerning the *Evangelium* and divided it into numbered sections, but to its textual history he contributed little. Similarly, Jeremiah Jones included Grynaeus's edition (with Fabricius's division into chapters and some of his emendations) in his study of the canonical and non-canonical New Testament writings, first published in 1726 (262-328). The version by Fabricius was adopted by Carl Christian Ludwig Schmidt in *Corpus omnium veterum apocryphorum extra Biblia* (1804, 57-107). All three editions accepted the text of the *Evangelium* as essentially stable, and promulgated the same printed vulgate form.

Nevertheless, late in the eighteenth century scholars were becoming aware that the printed *Evangelium* differed vastly from some of its manuscript versions. The first step towards the unsettling of the received text was the publication, by Johann Jakob Hess (1791, 437-83), of variant readings (but not of the entire text) from a tenth-century manuscript:

[1] Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, cod. 326 (s. X; Meier 1899, 297-300).

Placing readings of [1] and Fabricius side by side, Hess demonstrated the extent of divergence between the essentially sound text of the manuscript and the often corrupted readings transmitted in print. Several years later Andreas Birch (1804, 1-154), in the apparatus to a reprint of the text by Fabricius, printed text variants from a fourteenth-century manuscript,

[2] Roma, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, cod. 1146 (s. XIV),

which he considered superior to the corresponding readings in [1].

The two last-mentioned publications prepared the way for the first edition of the *Evangelium* based on several identifiable manuscript sources. That edition was published by Johann Carl Thilo (1832, 490-800). As its basis, Thilo used Hess's partial transcript of [1]. He emended and supplemented it, drawing on two early printed editions, Leipzig 1499 and 1516, and four additional manuscripts:

[3] "Cod. Halensis Biblioth. Orphanotrophei," not identified by shelf-mark in the edition. Now Halle, Archiv der Francke'schen Stiftungen, cod. P 7 (s. XV; Schmidt et al. 1876, 20).

[4] "Cod. Havniensis biblioth. regiae," not identified by shelf-mark. Now København, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, cod. Gl.kgl.S. 1336 4to (1400; Jørgensen 1926, 15-16). Thilo used a transcript of this manuscript prepared "opera celeberrimi Broensted a. 1805" (1832, cxxxix).

[5] Roma, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, cod. 1146 (s. XIV), as printed by Birch.

[6] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 1652 (s. XV; Bibliothèque Nationale 1939-83, 2: 109).

Thilo admittedly consulted only two of these manuscripts in person, but he examined several other codices at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, rejecting them as inferior. He was also aware of about seventy manuscripts mentioned in various printed catalogues, but he did not examine them.

Thilo's edition was certainly more reliable and representative than the *Orthodoxographa* and Fabricius, for it identified, however imperfectly, most of its sources and except for a few passages represented a widely diffused form of the text. It corrected a number of confused readings, and provided copious learned commentary, useful even today. But these improvements, impressive though they are in comparison with earlier editions, are still not sufficient for a modern scholar, for whom Thilo's work remains flawed in several obvious respects. First, it relies heavily on second-hand transcripts and printed materials. Second, it takes into account very few, easily accessible manuscripts. And third, it includes practically no variant readings, because Thilo, interested primarily in the Greek recension, believed that

> Nec enim virorum doctorum interesse potest, curiose cognoscere in tali libro Latino scribarum errores licentiamque vel insulsa monachorum oscitantium mendaciuncula et interpolamenta (1832, cxxxvi).

Consequently, he made no attempt to inquire into the rich textual traditions of the Latin *Evangelium* and offered no insights into its immediate contexts in Western Christendom.

Although reprinted by John Allen Giles (1852, 183-219), Thilo's work on the *Evangelium* was soon overshadowed by that of Constantin von Tischendorf. First published in 1853, Tischendorf's edition was much more ambitious and elaborate than its predecessors and soon became—like the text by Fabricius a century and a half earlier—the standard Latin version, a distinction it was to retain for over a hundred years. Its longevity has been largely a result of its relatively wide range of sources, reflected in the apparatus, and of the coherent, polished nature of its text. However, these two cornerstones of its vogue have long shown cracks and are now beginning to crumble under the weight of accumulated scholarship, for the

sources have turned out to represent but a fraction of the extant medieval copies, and the reconstructed text to be speculative and eclectic.

In his *Prolegomena* Tischendorf listed eleven manuscripts as his main sources for the *Evangelium*, six of which were brought to light for the first time. However, he transcribed or collated in full only three of the new witnesses:

[7] "Vaticanus, nescio quo numero notatus." Actually Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. lat. 4578 (s. XIV; Philippart 1972, 395 n. 1; Poncelet 1910, 119-20; Cranz 1988, reel 221). Designated by Tischendorf as A.

[8] Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. lat. 4363 (s. XII; Poncelet 1910, 119; Cranz 1988, reel 221). Designated by Tischendorf as B.

[9] Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, cod. 4326 [Lat. XIV, 43] (s. XIV-XV; Zorzanello 1985, 61-64; Frati 1909, 192-95). Designated by Tischendorf as C.

From the other three, he culled only selected passages:

[10] "Cod. Florentinus Laurentianus," designated as "Flor" but not identified by shelf-mark. Now Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, cod. Gaddi 115 (s. XV; Degli Innocenti 1979, 250-52).

[11] Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, cod. O.35 Supra (s. XIV; Jordan & Wool 1986, 34-36). Designated by Tischendorf as "Ambr."

[12] "Vindobonensis," designated as "Vind" but not identified by shelf-mark. Now Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 563 (s. V; Philippart 1972, 409-11).

The remaining five manuscripts mentioned in the *Prolegomena* are those used by Hess ([1] = D^b), Birch ([2] = D^c), and Thilo ([4] = Havn; [3] = Hal; [6] = Par). Tischendorf did not transcribe them anew but relied on the earlier published transcripts. His standard sources included also the text of Fabricius (D^a) and two earlier prints, Augsburg c. 1473 and Leipzig 1516 (the latter cited after Thilo). His debt to Fabricius and to the second-hand transcripts is especially significant in chapters II to IV and IX to X, where D^a, D^b, and D^c form the basis of his text; at least once, in chapter IX, 1, he has adopted from Fabricius a reading not attested by any other Latin witness.

Tischendorf's work would have been more reliable had he placed less trust in earlier publications and focused more intensely on primary manuscript sources. But even if he had done so, and even if he had consulted all manuscripts mentioned in the *Prolegomena* as well as a dozen or so alluded to in the apparatus, his sources would still have been hardly representative of about 400 extant codices of the *Evangelium*.[9] Like his predecessors, he worked with a handful of easily accessible, mostly late copies, and this did not allow him to do justice to a text with over a millennium of tradition.

If Tischendorf's sources were scant by modern standards, his editorial methods were ill-suited to the task. Disregarding manuscript evidence, he printed the *Gesta* and the *Descensus* separately because, he argued, they originated independently of each other. In editing the former, his main objective was evidently to reconstruct its original Latin form. Unlike Thilo, who preserved the integrity of the Latin text even when it strongly diverged from the Greek recension, Tischendorf reconstituted the Latin version largely in agreement with the Greek apocryphon. He "restored" it by arbitrarily switching from one manuscript to another, sporadically incorporating readings from marginal sources, even resorting to a modern Latin translation of the Coptic recension. The resulting Latin *Gesta* is thus fairly close to the Greek but distant from any surviving Latin version. In fact, it confuses three distinct textual types of the Latin apocryphon, discussed below.

Tischendorf abandoned this method of reconstruction when dealing with the second part of the Latin *Evangelium*, the *Descensus ad inferos*, probably because it occurs only in a few, mostly late Greek manuscripts and is completely absent from the Oriental recensions. Confronted with its two substantially different forms but having no definite model in Greek, he printed them separately as versions A and B. Thus this second part of his edition reflects, perhaps unintentionally, something of the dynamism of the work's textual tradition. As a whole, however, Tischendorf's remodelled text of the *Evangelium* conceals almost as much of the apocryphon as its expanded sources and fairly extensive textual apparatus bring to light.

Since the publication of Tischendorf's *Evangelium*, a handful of further editions have appeared. Some scholars have used Tischendorf's text and apparatus to construct hypothetical Latin versions corresponding to specific vernacular translations. One such version accompanies the Old English *Evangelium* edited by Thomas Powers Allen in 1968. Another, published by André Vaillant in the same year, reflects the Old Slavonic text. Both are based essentially on Tischendorf's sources D^{abc} (Fabricius, [1], and [2]) and neither uses any new manuscript witnesses. Other editors turned to as yet untapped sources and produced editions reflecting a single manuscript or a specific minor version of the apocryphon. Chronologically the earliest of them is the rarely noticed edition printed as part of the *Eulogium (historiarum sive temporis)* by Frank Scott Haydon in 1858 (92-141) from four insular manuscripts.[10] Another version, from Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, cod. 793 (s. XII), was reported by Anton Schönbach (1876), who listed its variant readings in his review of the second edition of Tischendorf's *Evangelia apocrypha*. Almost a hundred years later, in 1973, H. C. Kim published a teaching edition of [1], emended with the help of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 79 (s. XII). In keeping with the instructional nature of the series in which it appeared, Kim's edi-

tion has only the minimum of textual notes. More recently, Katherine Anne Smith Collett produced as part of her doctoral dissertation tentative, semi-diplomatic editions of two distinct versions of the *Evangelium*, one from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 17 (s. XII ex.), and the other from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 288 (s. XIII).[11] In 1986 David J. Lewis published an abridged version from London, British Library, MS Royal 13.A.14 (c. 1300). Another copy of the same redaction, apparently unknown to Lewis, is extant in London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 398 (s. XIII; James & Jenkins 1930-32, 548-54). And finally, in 1989 the text of the oldest known manuscript of the apocryphon, Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 563 [**12**], has been made available by Guy Philippart. All of these post-1853 editions have expanded our knowledge of the Latin versions of the *Evangelium*. However, limited in scope and critical apparatus, they have not completely displaced Tischendorf's edition as the standard scholarly reference text.

The preceding brief survey has shown that although the *Evangelium* has indeed been frequently printed in the last five centuries, the available editions give only partial, often fragmented reflections of the text and its traditions. Before Thilo, they all stemmed from the same sixteenth-century source, the *Orthodoxographa*. Thilo's own edition and most post-Tischendorf editions are essentially one-version or one-manuscript, non-critical editions. Tischendorf himself produced a speculative and eclectic text, which has repeatedly proven less useful than the textual notes that accompany it. None of these editions has used the entire range of extant manuscript sources, and none has seriously attempted to assess or document the evolution of the *Evangelium* in the Middle Ages. And since the majority of modern scholars know this apocryphon only through one or more of these imperfect editions, I think it is fair to say that our knowledge of it is at best shallow and superficial.

Manuscripts

The textual history of the *Evangelium Nicodemi* is extremely complex, and we still know little more than its general outline. Since Dobschütz (1919) scholars have been aware of the existence of two major forms of the text, one exhibited by Tischendorf's manuscripts D^b and D^c ([**1**] and [**2**]), and the other by his A, B, and C ([**7**], [**8**], and [**9**]); these two forms have often been termed *Evangelium* A and B, respectively. However, it appears that we should distinguish also a third type of the text, *Evangelium* C, represented in Tischendorf's edition by only one, little used witness, Ambr [**11**]. Each of these major textual forms includes a plethora of minor interrelated but distinct versions. Thorough characterization of those versions will probably require prior disentanglement of the work's Greek recensions, for it is possible and even probable that some Latin manuscripts

were corrected by comparison with Greek ones. Consequently, a detailed study of the evolution of the Latin *Evangelium* would be premature at this time. However, a preliminary look at the emerging patterns may stimulate interest and further research. With this aim, I should like to offer some tentative, exploratory observations on the medieval Latin versions of the apocryphon, based on examination of about 180 manuscripts, approximately 350 catalogue descriptions, and extensive correspondence with libraries.

The oldest surviving manuscript of the *Evangelium Nicodemi* in any language is probably the Latin palimpsest preserved in [12], recently edited by Professor Philippart. The lower writing of the palimpsest, dated by the best authorities to the fifth century (Despineux 1988), contains—besides a few passages from the canonical Gospel according to Matthew and the apocryphal infancy Gospel of Thomas—fairly extensive fragments of our *Evangelium.* Those fragments include two prologues—one introducing the alleged discoverer of the document and dating his discovery, the other dating Christ's passion and naming the author of the work—as well as parts of chapters I to XVI,[12] covering the trial before Pilate, the crucifixion, the imprisonment of Joseph of Arimathea, and the revelation of Christ's ascension. The palimpsest shows no trace of the *Descensus*, perhaps absent from the earliest Latin form, as from the Oriental recensions. On the whole, the Latin palimpsest corresponds to Tischendorf's Greek version A but not without occasional, perhaps significant, omissions. Thus, according to the Greek version, when the Jews ask Pilate to put Christ on trial (I/2),

> Pilate called them to him and said: "Tell me! How can I, a governor, examine a king?" They answered: "We do not say that he is a king, but he says he is" (Hennecke 1963-64, 1: 451).

Fragments preserved in the palimpsest do not include either Pilate's attempt to evade the problem or the Jews' reply. Similarly, in the Greek version of a later exchange, the Jews demand of Pilate (IV/2):

> "If a man blasphemes against Caesar, is he worthy of death or not?" Pilate said: "He is worthy of death" (Hennecke 1963-54, 1: 455).

The palimpsest again omits this somewhat repetitive passage. A thorough check of the Greek manuscripts could probably reveal whether these lacunae were introduced by the Latin translator (or an early redactor), or whether they were present already in the Greek source text.[13] But whatever their origin, these two lacunae were passed on to most medieval Latin manuscripts.

As far as I know, no later manuscript reproduces the palimpsest's unique text in its entirety.[14] The apocryphon must have gone through a number of revisions during the seventh and eighth centuries (the period from which

no Latin manuscripts seem to have survived), for the texts appearing in the ninth-, tenth-, and several eleventh-century codices are already markedly different. Their number is considerable, perhaps larger than that of any other Latin apocryphon, but with two exceptions (the Wien palimpsest [12] and the Einsiedeln manuscript [1]) they were overlooked by the early editors. Twenty manuscripts written before the twelfth century were identified by Albert Siegmund (1946, 35-36). I have been able to locate seven more:

[13] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, cod. Theol. lat. oct. 157 (s. IX ex.; Bischoff 1980, 230).[15]

[14] Kassel, Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel und Landesbibliothek, cod. Theol. fol. 271 (s. IX).[16]

[15] München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 17181 (s. XI; Halm et al. 1868-81, Tomi 2 pars 3: 85).

[16] München, Universitätsbibliothek, 2° Cod. ms. 87ª (s. IX; Daniel et al. 1974, 141-42).

[17] Orléans, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 341 (s. X-XI; Cuissard 1889, 183-86).

[18] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 5555 (s. XI; Bibliothèque Nationale 1739-44, 4: 130).

[19] Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, cod. 73 (s. XI?; Sorbelli 1925, 95).

The majority of early manuscripts belong to the A family of texts, best known from the Einsiedeln manuscript [1]. *Evangelium* A has lost the first prologue of the Wien palimpsest [12] but preserves almost verbatim the second (beginning "Factum est in anno . . .") and chapters I through VII, relating the trial before Pilate. It has also inherited from the palimpsest the two lacunae in chapters I and IV. In chapters IX and X—the final altercation between Pilate and the Jews and an account of the crucifixion—it remains fairly close to the palimpsest, in spite of occasional verbal differences.[17] With chapter XII, however, it begins to diverge more noticeably, abridging and summarizing the imprisonment of Joseph of Arimathea and Christ's ascension. Moreover, it adds to the first sixteen chapters an account of Christ's visit to the netherworld, the *Descensus ad inferos*, by the ninth century apparently a regular feature of the apocryphon.

Although textually similar to one another, the early manuscripts of type A fall into at least two groups. In the surviving prologue some copies date the passion to the consulate "Rufini et Rubellionis," "sub principatu sacerdotum Iudaeorum Ioseph et Caiphae," while others date it to the consulate "Bassi et Tarquillionis," "sub principibus sacerdotum Iudaeorum Ioseph et Annae et Caiphae." The two groups of manuscripts differ beyond the prologue, most starkly in chapters I/6 to III/1, narrating Pilate's wife's dream and the testimony of the twelve righteous Jews. Readings of the "Rufini et Rubellionis" (RR) group usually coincide with those of the Ein-

siedeln manuscript [1]; this group includes the following manuscripts:

[20] Laon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 265 (s. IX; Ravaisson-Mollien 1849, 155-58).

[21] München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 19105 (s. X; Halm et al. 1868-81, Tomi 2 pars 3: 231).

Manuscripts of the "Bassi et Tarquillionis" (BT) group either omit this section altogether (subgroup BT^{o}), as in [17] and the following examples:

[22] Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, cod. 169 (s. X; Meier 1899, 135)

[23] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 1605 (s. XI; Bollandists 1889-93, 2: 471; Delisle 1888, 47-50)

or exhibit a divergent text (subgroup BT^{d}), as in these examples:

[24] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 5327 (s. X; Bollandists 1889-93, 2: 241-43)

[25] München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 642 (s. XI ex.; Halm et al. 1868-81, Tomi 1 pars 1: 167-68)

Subgroup BT^{o} moves directly from I/6 to III/1:

> Et iussit preses ingredi Ihesum secundo. Et fecit cursor eundem scismate sicut et prius. Dicunt Iudei Pilato: "Nobis non licet occidi quemquam." Dicit Pilatus Iudeis: "Vobis dicit Deus non occides, non mihi." ([22], p. 70).

The abruptness of this shift destroys the narrative continuity: the episode of the standards is not resolved, and the cause of Pilate's frustration is not clearly explained. Therefore, the omission was probably caused not by deliberate abridgment but by accidental loss of a folio in the common source of this subgroup of manuscripts.

The BT^{d} manuscripts, which preserve the passage in question, differ in it sharply from the Einsiedeln manuscript and related RR manuscripts, as illustrated here:

[1] (RR)[18]

[12v] Pilatus uero uidens timor adprehendit eum et coepit exsurgere de sede sua. Cogitante eo exsurgere de sede sua, matrona ipsius Pilati nomine Procula misit ad eum dicens: "Nihil tibi et homini isti iusto, multa enim passa sum propter eum hac nocte." Respondentes Iudaei dixerunt Pilato: "Numquid non diximus quoniam maleficus est? Ecce somnium misit ipse ad uxorem tuam."

[24] (BT^{d})

[37v] Videns autem praeses timor et tremor adprehendit eum et statim uoluit surgere de tribunali. Haec autem eo cogitante ut surgeret, uxor eius misit ad eum dicens: "Nihil tibi sit et homini illi iusto. Multa enim passa sum propter eum in ista nocte." Conuocans autem Pilatus Iudaeos dixit eis: "Scitis quia mulier mea, Procula, cultrix Dei est et Iudaea immo magis uobis consentiens est." Dicunt ei Iudaei: "Ita est et nos scimus." Dicit eis Pilatus: "Ecce misit uxor mea dicens: 'Nihil sit tibi et iusto illi. Multa enim passa sum propter eum in ista nocte.' " Iudaei autem responderunt et

> dixerunt Pilato: "Nonne diximus uobis quia magus est? Ecce somniorum fantasma misit ad uxorem tuam."

Not only are the two redactions far apart lexically, but the Paris version **[24]** includes Pilate's remark about Procula's connection with and sympathy for the Jews, which is absent from the Einsiedeln text **[1]**. A similar point is made in the Greek rendition and in the B versions of the *Evangelium* discussed below.[19] In fact, this portion of the Paris text largely agrees with the *Evangelium* type B in both content and wording; the exact nature of their relationship, however, is yet to be established.

The bulk of later medieval copies was descended from these already diverse early texts of type A; they continued to be productive, and on their basis new textual traditions continued to develop. There emerged abridged versions—not necessarily related to one another—usually beginning with the crucifixion or the imprisonment of Joseph of Arimathea, as the text published by Lewis or the ones preserved in the following manuscripts:

[26] London, British Library, MS Harley 3185 (s. XIV; Nares 1973, 3: 8)

[27] London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 165 (s. XIII in.; James & Jenkins 1930-32, 260-63)

[28] München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 9022 (s. XV; Halm et al. 1868-81, Tomi 2 pars 1: 76)

Occasionally an adventurous redactor amplified the original text, supplying details not found in the early manuscripts, as did the author of the version in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Addit. A. 367 (see above).

Several later manuscripts of British origin—also members of the extended A family—introduce the *Evangelium* with two passages, one beginning "Apprehensus autem Ioseph . . ." and the other "Attonitae mentes obstupuere tortorum. . .."[20] The former comes from Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, I, 21 (1951, 17-18), and briefly tells the story of Joseph's incarceration and miraculous release from prison; the latter, always attributed to St. Augustine, is found in the sermons "De Pascha I" and "De Pascha IA" of Eusebius "Gallicanus" (1970, 141-50) and in the pseudo-Augustinian sermon 160 (Migne 1844-68, 39: cols 2059-61), and describes the terror of the infernal troops at Christ's arrival in hell. In the prologue, these manuscripts date the passion to "anno vicesimo tertio imperii Tiberii caesaris" and name Archelaus—not Herod, as do most manuscripts—as father of Herod Antipas. The exact range of and relationships between these and other later medieval versions of *Evangelium* A are yet to be investigated, but clearly there was much cross-pollination among the traditions, which were open to influences from other Latin and perhaps also Greek forms of the apocryphon.

While most medieval manuscripts of the *Evangelium* represent variations on type A, a small group (late eleventh or early twelfth to fifteenth century) preserves a considerably altered form of type B. In addition to Tischendorf's manuscripts A, B, and C ([7], [8], and [9]), and to [15], I am aware of the following complete or partial texts of this type:

[29] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 288 (Gounelle 1989).

[30] Cambridge, University Library, MS Mm.VI.15 (s. XIV; Hardwick & Luard 1856-67, 4: 388-92).

[31] London, British Library, MS Add. 29630 (s. XII; British Library 1877, 687).

[32] London, British Library, MS Royal 8 B.XV (s. XIV; Warner & Gilson 1921, 1: 225-26).

[33] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Pat. Lat. 117 (s. XV; Coxe 1854, 359-61).

[34] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. D. 1236 (s. XIII; Macray 1862-1900, 4: 371-72).

[35] Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, cod. 473 (s. XI-XII; Abate & Luisetto 1975, 2: 447-55).

[36] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 6041A (s. XIV; Bollandists 1889-93, 2: 549-50).

[37] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 14864 (s. XII; Delisle 1869, 54).

[38] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 503 (s. XIV-XV; Omont 1892, 337-38).

[39] Salzburg, Stiftsbibliothek St. Peter, cod. a.V.27 (s. XII; Hayer 1982, 71-72).

[40] Vallbona de las Monjas, Monasterio Cisterciense, cod. 3 (s. XIV).[21]

[41] Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. 2901 [Lat. II, 65] (s. XIV; Valentinelli 1868-73, 2: 58-59).

Evangelium B is often introduced with a homiletic preface, "Audistis, fratres karissimi, quae acta sunt . . ." Then a slightly modified first prologue, present in the palimpsest and Greek recensions but absent from the A texts, begins "Ego Aeneas Hebraeus . . ."[22] The other prologue, beginning "Factum est . . .," is missing. The first twelve chapters follow the palimpsest and type A fairly closely in content, even though they often depart from them stylistically. However, the two lacunae are filled in with the text corresponding to the Greek and Oriental recensions:

[I/2] Tunc respondens Pylatus dixit Iudeis: "Dicite mihi quomodo possum cum sim preses regem audire." Dixerunt ei Iudei: "Nos eum non dicimus regem set ipse se dixit filium Dei esse et regem."

[IV/2] "Dic nobis si quis cesarem blasphemauerit, dignus est morte an non?" Dicit Iudeis Pylatus: "Dignus est morte." ([35], ff. 139r, 141v).[23]

This form of the apocryphon also regularly includes Pilate's comment about his wife's pro-Jewish sentiments, worded almost identically to that found in the BT^d version. In chapters XII to XVI, it preserves the unabridged

text of the palimpsest and therefore diverges strongly from A. Finally, *Descensus* B differs from its more common counterpart in selection, arrangement, and wording of material. It eliminates some speeches of the patriarchs, reduces the number of prophecies in hell, and omits the meeting with Enoch and Elias; however, it expands the account of the discovery of Leucius and Karinus and adds such details as the arrival of the good thief in hell.

Although fewer, type B texts are no more homogeneous than type A. A small subgroup of the earliest type B manuscripts contains a full, unabridged text of the *Gesta* but seems hesitant about the *Descensus*: one manuscript [37] has no *Descensus*; another [15] merges *Gesta* B with a Latin sermon on the descent, entitled by its twentieth-century editor "Sermo de confusione diaboli" and based on homilies ascribed to Eusebius of Alexandria (Rand 1904-05); and yet another ([39], but possibly also [33]) combines *Gesta* B with *Descensus* A.[24] This ambivalence about the *Descensus* may suggest that the source of type B consisted, like the Wien palimpsest [12], only of the *Gesta* and that *Descensus* B was not yet generally adopted as its continuation at a time when the more common A versions had already acquired and popularized the story of the harrowing of hell as the proper conclusion of the apocryphon.

Of type B manuscripts that include *Descensus* B, only a few contain the complete *Gesta*.[25] The majority abbreviate it, excising the episodes described in the canonical gospels. The first significant omission extends from chapter II/3 to IV/5 and covers the Jews' charges against Christ, the attempts of the twelve righteous Jews to save Christ, and some further details of the trial before Pilate. All these missing episodes are summed up with just one sentence: "Quid multa? Iam omnia nota sunt uobis a sancto euuangelio" ([29], f. 42r).[26] The second lacuna covers chapters IX to XI, including the release of Barabbas, the crucifixion, and Christ's death. This expurgated version of *Gesta* B is evidently the work of a later medieval redactor interested primarily in supplementary, extra-evangelical details concerning Christ's passion and death.

The *Evangelium* type C survives in even fewer manuscripts than B but is important because of its impact on the apocryphon's editions. It usually begins with a variant of the characteristic incipit, "Quod inventum est scriptum . . .," and shows close narrative affinity to *Evangelium* A. However, it condenses or excises certain episodes while expanding others, and often diverges in lexicon, style, and minor factual detail from the other Latin and Oriental forms of the apocryphon. It mentions, for instance, that the standards that bowed before Christ were crowned with gilded imperial images and that Christ was accused of blasphemy because he referred to his place at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Pilate's remark about his wife's pro-Jewish sentiments is also included, but with wording different

from that found elsewhere in the Latin tradition. Most important and characteristic, however, is the presence of an additional chapter (XXVIII in Tischendorf's edition) concluding the *Descensus*, which relates Pilate's conversation with the high priests in the synagogue and the priests' admission of Christ's divinity. This chapter was included by all editors from Herold to Tischendorf, and also formed part of the Leipzig 1516 edition and probably of its 1499 predecessor as well.

Evangelium C is preserved in Tischendorf's manuscript Ambr [11] and in five other witnesses, two of which antedate the twelfth century:

[42] Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, cod. Ripoll 106 (s. X; García Villada 1915, 56-58).

[43] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 3214 (s. XIV; Bibliothèque Nationale 1939-83, 4: 359-61).

[44] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 3628 (s. XV; Bibliothèque Nationale 1939-83, 6:386-89).

[45] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 4977 (s. XIV; Bollandists 1889-93, 1: 386; Bibliothèque Nationale 1739-44, 4: 24).

[46] Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 2171 (s. XI; Millares Carlo 1961, 403).

The two earliest manuscripts are both connected with Spain: [42] was once a Ripoll book, and [46], the only copy of the *Evangelium* in Visigothic script, was at Silos. It is therefore possible that *Evangelium* C originated on the Iberian peninsula.

In several other codices, mostly of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the apocryphon shows many textual idiosyncrasies of the C type embedded in what is essentially text A. This version seems to be a result of a partial fusion of the two textual traditions. Here the "Factum est . . ." prologue is preserved much as in type A but strangely dates the passion to "anno nonagesimo" of Tiberius and asserts that "Theodosius autem magnus imperator fecit ea [i.e. gesta] transferri de Hebraeo in Latinum."[27] The *Descensus* is normally followed by chapter XXVIII. The following manuscripts are known to contain this version:

[47] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, cod. Theol. lat. fol. 688 (1419; Becker & Brandis 1985, 212-14).

[48] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, cod. Theol. lat. fol. 690 (1431; Becker & Brandis 1985, 215-16).

[49] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 500 (s. XIV-XV; James 1912, 2: 450-53).

[50] Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 1422 [O.9.10] (s. XV; James 1900-04, 3: 448-51).

[51] Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Lat. 117 (s. XIV; De Ricci & Wilson 1935-40, 1: 984).[28]

[52] Charleville, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 61 (s. XIV, XV; Quicherat 1879, 575).

[53] Hannover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, cod. I 247 (s. XIV; Härtel & Ekowski 1982, 94-95).

[54] Poitiers, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 425 (s. XIV/XV; Lièvre 1894, 118-19).[29]

[55] Troyes, Biblithèque Municipale 1636 (s. XII ex.; Harmand 1855, 690-92).

Although at times far apart, *Evangelium* A and *Evangelium* B must both go back to the same original Latin translation, as each faithfully preserves large if separate sections of the oldest text, the Wien palimpsest. *Gesta* A may in fact have been based on it. *Gesta* B must have either descended from an earlier, fuller version of the Latin translation or resulted from a later revision carried out with the aid of a Greek manuscript. As for the two forms of the *Descensus*, version A seems to have become part of the apocryphon earlier than B. This, however, does not preclude the possibility that *Descensus* B antedated the A version as an independent piece.[30] The text of *Evangelium* C has not yet been fully investigated, but it appears to be much closer to A than to B. It might in fact be an early offshoot of A that sprang up somewhere on the Iberian peninsula. The affinity to A is particularly pronounced in a group of later manuscripts, which seems to have reverted to A while preserving many characteristic readings of C.

Conclusion

Even this cursory, tentative overview of Latin manuscripts of the *Evangelium Nicodemi* reveals the richness and dynamism of its textual tradition. Its apocryphal, spurious character, recognized by at least some scribes, and its self-declared status as a translation invited lexical substitutions and even more substantial stylistic revisions. Far from being a closed, guarded text, it kept changing and evolving. It grew and expanded over the centuries, assimilating such pieces as Pilate's letter, chapter XXVIII, the *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* (Dobschütz 1899, 158**-189**), and the *Somnium Neronis* (Dobschütz 1915; Speyer 1978). The textual tradition of the *Evangelium* continued to diversify until the end of the Middle Ages, and a number of distinct versions still survives in hundreds of manuscripts.

The evolution of the *Evangelium* did not end, however, with the introduction of printing, for the editions by Herold, Thilo, and Tischendorf are, in fact, further transformations of the apocryphon. None of them is based on a comprehensive analysis of all surviving manuscripts, and none gives an accurate indication of its textual range. Instead, they fuse and conflate manuscript texts with little awareness of those texts' affiliations or of their place in the overall tradition. Editions of single texts or versions, like those of Haydon, Kim, or Lewis, are more reliable because they attempt to recover rather than create; unfortunately, they usually provide

little perspective on or context for the edited material. Thus our knowledge of the *Evangelium* remains very limited. If we are to enlarge and refine it, and become truly familiar with the *Evangelium*, we must start where so many texts still wait to be discovered—in manuscripts.

NOTES

*I should like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for its financial support of my research on the *Evangelium Nicodemi* and the members of the Association pour l'étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne for their generous hospitality, encouragement, and scholarly assistance.

1. For bibliography see Charlesworth (1987). O'Ceallaigh's discussion of the stages of the apocryphon's composition (1963) is not wholly reliable; see Philippart (1972, 396 n. 3).

2. Cf. Tischendorf (1876, 333-432).

3. See, for instance, Hoffmann (forthcoming), Marx & Drennan (1987), Masser (1978), Masser & Siller (1987), Ford (1973).

4. Masser (1987, 104-6) briefly describes these editions and gives some bibliographical references; he also prints (448-67) the text of the Augsburg edition.

5. The listed editions are identified in the following catalogues: (5) in Nielsen (1919, 89), (6) in *Verzeichnis* (1983-88, 2: 736 no. B 5285), (7) in British Library (1959-66, 155: col. 501), (8) in Nijfoff & Kronenberg (1923-42, 2: 661 no. 3602), and (9) in Graesse (1950, 4: 669).

6. Masser (1987, 105) calls the Köln edition a forerunner of Leipzig 1516. This seems rather odd since the latter bears the same title as Leipzig 1499 (cf. Masser [1987, 104] and *Verzeichnis* [1983-88, 2: 736 no. B 5285]) and likely carries the same text.

7. The *Evangelium* occurs on the Index of Pope Paul IV (1559), the Tridentine Index (1564), the Liège Index (1569), etc. See Reusch (1967, 292; 1961, 272, 287).

8. In this and other citations from manuscripts, I have kept the original grammar and orthography but capitalized proper nouns and added basic punctuation for ease of reading.

9. I intend to publish a full list of those manuscripts in the near future.

10. The four manuscripts are: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 740 [R.7.2] (s. XIV in.; James 1900-04, 2: 216-17); Dublin, Trinity College, MS 497 [E.2.26] (s. XIV; Abbott 1900, 74); London, British Library, MS Cotton Galba E.VII (s. XV in.; Planta 1974, 363); London, Lincoln's Inn Library, MS Hale 73 (s. XIV ex.; Ker 1969, 126-27).

11. The *Evangelium* from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 288, has been re-edited diplomatically by Gounelle (1989).

12. In what follows I have adopted Tischendorf's division into chapters. All comparisons with the Greek text are tentative because Tischendorf's edition of Greek versions (1876, 210-332) is as eclectic as that of Latin recensions.

13. The prevalent Greek form of the apocryphon seems to have contained the complete text, attested in the majority of Tischendorf's Greek manuscripts and in the Oriental versions. However, at least one Greek codex, Tischendorf's B, omits the second of these passages (the codex is acephalous and does not have chapter I, 2).

14. Among the few manuscripts which contain two prologues roughly corresponding to those of the Wien palimpsest, but with other readings significantly different, are codex Vaticanus latinus 5094 (s. XII; Cranz 1988, reel 221; Poncelet 1910, 127-28); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 1154 (s. XV; Delisle 1871, 56) and Ms. lat. 1652 [6]; and Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. VI. 54 (s. XIV; Hardwick & Luard 1856-67, 2: 547).

15. Formerly Phillipps 16355; listed as such by Siegmund, who did not know its new location.

16. Communication of Dr. Hartmut Broszinski.

17. Chapters VIII and XI are not preserved in the palimpsest, and so no comparison is possible.

18. Cf. Kim (1973, 16).

19. This section is not preserved in the Wien palimpsest.

20. The following manuscripts contain these prefatory passages: [29]; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 441 (s. XIII; James 1912, 2: 349-53); Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 256 (s. XII ex.; James 1905, 230-32); Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Adv. 18.5.18 (s. XIII; National Library of Scotland 1971, 101; a detailed description provided by I. C. Cunningham); London, British Library, MS Add. 17003 (s. XV; British Library 1864, 344), MS Arundel 52 (s. XIII-XIV; British Library 1834, 1: 11), and MS Royal 7 C.XII (s. XII; Warner & Gilson 1921, 1: 180-81); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 406 (1291; Madan & Craster 1922, 295) and MS Bodl. 556 (s. XIII in.; Madan and Craster 1922, 317). Several others incorporate only one of the extracts.

21. A microfilm of this manuscript is available at Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, Collegeville, Minnesota.

22. The name is unstable and varies from manuscript to manuscript.

23. The former exchange appears also in [6] and in Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. VI. 54 (cf. n. 14 above), which are based essentially on type A. The latter passage is absent from those manuscripts of *Evangelium* B which omit the text from II/3 to IV/5 (see below).

24. This last, hybrid form of the *Evangelium* became the source of a few medieval German translations of the apocryphon; cf. Hoffmann (1987).

25. At this time I am aware of only four: [9], [31], [32], and [35].

26. Cf. Collett (1981, 184).

27. However, at least one manuscript, Winchester College, MS 41 (Yeats-Edwards 1978, 10), contains this prologue but shows no other features of C.

28. Ms. Laura Light, Houghton Library, has provided me with a detailed description of this manuscript.

29. This manuscript shows several characteristic readings of C but has no chapter XXVIII.

30. Matter (1980, 126) suggests that the use in *De septem sigillis* of the phrase "momordit infernum," which occurs also in *Descensus* B, "indicates that the B version was in circulation . . . certainly before 800." However, the phrase in question, derived from Hos 13:14 ("morsus tuus ero, inferne!"), was a commonplace in discussions of Christ's descent into hell. It appears, for instance, in "Sermo de symbolo," c. 7, associated with St. Augustine (Migne 1844-68, 40: col. 1194), in which the bite of hell is interpreted as that portion of the dead which was saved by Christ during the descent. Therefore, the occurence of the expression 'momordit infernum' in *De septem sigillis* is not sufficient proof that *Descensus* B was current before 800.

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